



# PRESS RELEASE

## U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL MATERIALS AGENCY

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**For More Information Contact:**  
ABCDF Public Affairs (410) 436-5253  
CMA Public Affairs (410) 436-4555

### ARMY DRAINS AND DECONTAMINATES LEAKING CONTAINER

ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND, Md. – This weekend, the Army safely transported a ton container to the Aberdeen Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (ABCDF) that had leaked mustard vapor this past summer and fall. The container was successfully drained and decontaminated. After the draining was completed and the decontaminated container was safely placed back into storage, parts from a kit used to seal the container's plugs caused a mustard agent sensor to alarm in an area of the facility under engineering controls.

ABCDF operators noticed an odor when they removed their protective masks after enclosing the kit parts in a doubled bag. The operators left the room and an alarm sounded immediately after they left. At no time did any agent vapor leave the building. The workers were monitored, and as a precautionary measure, were sent to ABCDF's medical clinic for evaluation where they were cleared and returned to work.

This weekend's operation concluded a several-month-long probe and designed wait that began back on June 23, 2004, when an agent sensor inside a storage structure detected a trace amount of agent vapor. The building was immediately sealed and a chemical agent filter was attached to its ventilation system to prevent any potential release of vapor to the outside. The Army successfully isolated the container and sealed the leak by tightening the container's valve. However, in mid-August, the container began leaking again. The building's filtration system was turned back on to contain any traces of agent vapor.

After the mid-August event, site safety officials determined it best to keep the leaking container under engineering controls within the storage structure until workers could safely move it with the least amount of risk. As the container was located in the rear of the storage building and was surrounded by numerous other containers, the low risk course of action was to wait until processing operations eventually emptied out the surrounding containers. "This was a safe and prudent method to deal with the leaking container," said Mary Jo Civis, Edgewood Chemical Activity (ECA) Civilian Executive. "It minimized the risk of moving surrounding containers to our workers, the community, and the environment."

"The safe transport from storage and draining of the leaking container is a real success story," according to ABCDF Site Project Manager Joseph Lovrich. "Personnel from ECA and ABCDF worked together to develop a transport plan to safely move the leaking container from its specially engineered, sealed storage building to ABCDF for safe and rapid draining and decontamination. The transport and processing was accomplished safely, and workers at ABCDF responded to the alarm exactly as they have been trained," he added.



For more information,  
contact the  
Edgewood Chemical  
Stockpile Outreach Office

Woodbridge Station  
1011-B Woodbridge Center Way  
Edgewood, MD 21040

(410) 676-6800 or  
[www.cma.army.mil](http://www.cma.army.mil)



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Since beginning disposal operations in April 2003, workers at the ABCDF have safely neutralized over 55 percent of the Aberdeen mustard agent stockpile. More information about storage and disposal operations at ABCDF is available at the U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency's Web site at <http://www.cma.army.mil>.

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*The U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency is responsible for safely storing and eliminating the United States' aging chemical weapons and agent stockpiles and for the safe elimination of recovered chemical materiel.*



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